



December 2, 2009

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
c/o Mr. Harley Lappin
Director, Bureau of Prisons
Room 654, Holc Building
320 First Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20534

Dear Secretary Gates and Attorney General Holder:

The Thomson Correctional Center is a maximum-security prison currently operated by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and located in Thomson, Illinois. Discussions recently began between the state of Illinois and the federal Bureau of Prisons (BoP) regarding the potential purchase and operation of the facility by the federal government. As we understand the proposal, Thomson would house approximately 1,600-2,000 federal inmates, along with a limited number of detainees currently located in Guantanamo Bay. Those detainees would be housed in a completely separate portion of the facility operated by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

As proposed, the BoP would operate Thomson as a maximum-security prison under the most restrictive security conditions, including individual confinement and isolation capabilities. The Defense Department would add even more security measures, including additional external perimeter security, which will make Thomson the most secure federal prison in the nation.

In order to give all factors related to the proposed purchase due consideration, representatives from several Illinois law enforcement organizations, including the Illinois State Police (ISP), Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Illinois Sheriff's Association (ISA) and the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS), reviewed and discussed any potential impact on public safety across the state. Safety concerns likely to impact Illinois law enforcement are listed below:

Control of Inmate/Detainee Population in the Event of an Emergency

Local, county and state law enforcement have extensive interoperability agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOU) already in place with the IDOC and BoP facilities throughout Illinois. Any need for additional security can be met with properly drafted MOUs with BoP and DoD. A comprehensive review of the current interoperability agreements will need to take place prior to the prison's full operation, but they would be expected to address any security issues without additional risk to the public. Furthermore, it is likely that additional federal resources in the form of funding, personnel and equipment will be needed in order to maintain the current level of safety.

Visitors to the Facility

Inmates incarcerated in the BoP portion of the facility will be allowed to receive visitors in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the BoP. However, as outlined by the DoD, detainees will not be authorized visitors with the exception of legal representation and organizations such as the International Red Cross. Based on the type of visitors to this facility, there is no predicted, measurable change in public safety in the region when compared to any other prison facility already located in the state of Illinois.

Mitigating Risk Due to Presence of Detainees

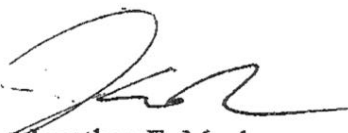
Illinois currently houses 35 inmates with a nexus to or history of international or domestic terrorism in the federal prison located in Marion. The addition of a limited number of detainees in an Illinois prison would be unlikely to significantly alter the security situation in the state. However, steps can be taken by Illinois law enforcement in order to minimize any potential risks. The Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center (STIC) in Springfield, Illinois, is designed as an intelligence fusion center for the purpose of bringing together the efforts of local, state and federal agencies. In addition to the agencies already participating in this fusion center, it would be helpful if DoD could support and provide assistance in the efforts of the STIC.

Release of Prisoners Following Incarceration

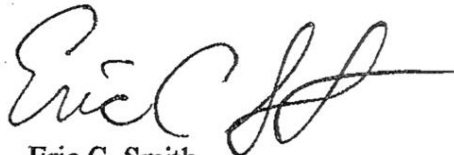
BoP Director Harley Lappin stated that inmates at federal prisons are typically released into federally-approved halfway houses in the communities where they are from with the approval from the U.S. Probation Office in that district.

No detainees transferred from Guantanamo to the United States will be released domestically. The President signed two laws earlier this year that would prohibit such release. It is also our understanding that no detainees transferred to Thomson will be tried in Illinois federal courts. The bottom-line is the impact of inmates being released from this prison is not expected to be different from any other prison already located in Illinois. Increased police presence in the area surrounding Thomson will help to address any issues that could arise, which is something that can be achieved through additional funding or resources from the federal government.

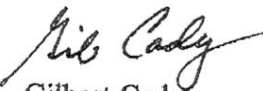
After careful consideration of these factors on the public safety of people living in the area surrounding the facility, Illinois law enforcement is confident in our ability to successfully mitigate any risks associated with the joint operation of the Thomson Correctional Center by the federal Bureau of Prisons and the U.S. Department of Defense. We recommend a full review, to include any necessary refinements, of our current interoperability agreements if Thomson is officially chosen. We should also work with the federal government to further explore and detail law enforcement's recommendations at the local, county and state levels in order to obtain the necessary additional resources, including manpower, equipment and funding. Given that support, we strongly believe that the operation of this facility can be conducted without any increased risk to public safety. We would never support anything that might compromise our ability to protect and serve the people of Illinois.



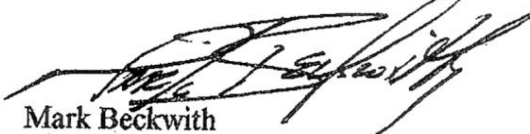
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